

SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE 2004 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Tacoma Planning Commission

April 21, 2004

A. SUBJECT:

“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update” – a document representing the City’s determination for revisions needed to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, pursuant to the “2004 Update” requirements of the State Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.130).

B. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL:

The **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** is being proposed for adoption by the City Council. It is a work program that summarizes the findings of the review of the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations, determines the need for revision, identifies key issues that need to be addressed during the revision, and provides a general timeline for the revision.

In developing the scope of work, the following GMA-required elements of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and the development regulations were reviewed: Generalized Land Use Plan, Housing Plan, Capital Facilities Plan and Program, Utilities Plan, Transportation Plan and Program, Environmental Policy Plan, and Critical Areas Preservation Regulations. Also reviewed were other plan elements not required by GMA, zoning regulations, and other development regulations.

The review concluded that, overall, the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations remain consistent with GMA. However, the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance should be revised to comply with the requirements of GMA specifically relative to the incorporation of Best Available Science. Other key issues, including modifications to policies where needed, in various elements of the Comprehensive Plan should also be addressed.

More detailed reporting on the key issues, element-by-element, is presented below.

Land Use Element:

- Population projections should be updated to reflect the recently adopted population allocation by the Pierce County Council.
- New policies on accessory dwelling units should be considered to provide additional guidance.
- Consider policies on lot area.

- Revise policies for historic preservation and add maps of historic districts.
- Revise all maps to indicate County designated and City proposed UGA boundaries.
- Add text and maps pertaining to the regional urban growth and manufacturing/industrial centers.
- Clarify relationships between land use intensity and zoning classifications.
- Modify plan amendment description for consistency with Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 13.02 relative to Planning Commission procedures.
- Review policies and regulations for incompatible uses adjacent to general aviation airports.

Housing Element:

- Projections on housing needs and conditions should be updated based on 2000 Census data.
- The countywide methodology for fair share distribution using 1990 Census showed Tacoma providing more than its fair share of affordable housing. An updated countywide analysis is needed based on 2000 Census data.

Capital Facilities Element:

- Evaluate level of service standards and revise where appropriate.

Utilities Element:

- Text and policies regarding Click! Network may be added.
- Text and policies may need revisions pertaining to Tacoma Public Utilities' rail service, although there are already policies in the transportation element that speak to multimodal systems.

Transportation Element:

- Provide level of service standards for Highways of Statewide Significance and regionally significant highways, based on guidelines provided by the Washington State Department of Transportation.
- Update the inventory of the multimodal systems.
- Ensure consistency with Destination 2030: Metropolitan Transportation Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region.

Environmental Policy Plan:

- Policies relative to the critical areas may need to be revised in accordance with proposed revisions to the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance.
- Policies relative to recreation and open space should be further reviewed to ensure consistency with the Recreation and Open Space Facilities Plan, adopted in 2000.

Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance:

- Incorporate the best available science, which may result in changes to regulations for wetland buffers, erosion hazard areas, flood hazard areas, landslide hazard areas, South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District, gulches, steep slope vegetation and development, and aquifer recharge areas.
- Give special consideration to the preservation or enhancement of anadromous fisheries in reviewing policies and regulations.

Other Development Regulations:

- Update the residential zoning regulations, which is the 3rd phase of the Zoning Code Update, following the completion of the industrial and commercial code updates.
- The Environmental Code (Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 13.12), which provides the process and procedures for conducting environmental review, will be revised to reflect past amendments to GMA and to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).

C. FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The *Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 1993 by Ordinance 25360 and amended by ordinance once every year thereafter, is Tacoma's comprehensive plan as required by GMA. The plan contains five primary elements mandated by GMA, i.e., land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities and transportation. It also contains general elements addressing citywide issues, subarea elements focusing on a neighborhood or a specialized geographic area, and implementation programs identifying actions and projects to carry out the goals and policies.
2. Development regulations are controls placed on the development and use of land. They include, but are not limited to, zoning controls, critical area ordinances, shoreline master programs, official controls, planned unit development ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and binding site plan ordinances. Development regulations are a means to carry out the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. GMA requires that any change to development regulations shall be consistent with and implement the comprehensive plan.
3. GMA requires that the City take legislative action to review and, if needed, revise its comprehensive plan and development regulations to ensure that the plan and regulations continue to comply with the requirements of GMA. Said process, which consists of two phases, i.e., the compliance review and the revision, shall be completed by December 1, 2004, and is usually referred to as the "2004 Update."
4. For the first phase of the 2004 Update, GMA requires that the City Council adopt, by a resolution following a public hearing, a work program that summarizes the findings of the compliance review, identifies the need for revision, and establishes a schedule for the revision.

5. The **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** has been prepared by the Tacoma Economic Development Department to fulfill the GMA requirement for the first phase of the 2004 Update.
6. A briefing of the legislative requirements and background information about the scope of work was presented to the Community Council on Thursday, January 22, 2004.
7. The **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** was presented to and discussed by the Planning Commission at public meetings in November 2003 and February 2004. The Commission authorized the distribution of the document for public review and comment on February 18, 2004.
8. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** on Wednesday, March 17, 2004.
9. Proper written notice of the Planning Commission’s public hearing was mailed to Neighborhood Council board members, neighborhood groups, agencies, organizations, adjacent jurisdictions, City and State departments, and other interested individuals. Approximately 300 copies of the notice were mailed out.
10. The notice included general information regarding the time and place of the public hearing, the purpose of the public hearing, a summary of the scope of work, and where additional information could be obtained.
11. Copies of the public hearing notice and draft copies of the scope of work were placed in all branches of the Tacoma Public Library. They were also made available for review at the offices of the Tacoma Economic Development Department and posted on the City’s Website at www.cityoftacoma.org/54CompPlan.
12. Advertisement of the Planning Commission’s public hearing was published in The News Tribune on Wednesday, March 10, 2004.
13. No oral testimony was received at the Planning Commission’s public hearing. The record of the public hearing remained open for 10 days through March 26, 2004, by which time four letters of comments as written testimony were received.
14. A **“Summary of Public Testimony and Staff Observations and Recommendations”** report was presented to the Planning Commission on April 7, 2004. The letters of comments were attached to the report. The report suggested that most of the written comments were associated with the environmental issues already within the scope of revision to the Critical Areas Preservation Ordinance, and that the revision of the ordinance was part of the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update.”**
15. In addition to the “2004 Update” requirement, GMA allows counties and cities to amend their comprehensive land use plans and/or development regulations generally only once each year except that amendments may be considered more frequently for limited circumstances. All proposed amendments shall be considered concurrently so that the

cumulative effect of the various changes can be ascertained. This requirement of GMA is generally referred to as the “Annual Amendments.”

16. Applications from public and private entities for the 2004 Annual Amendment should be submitted to the City by March 31, 2004. To date, the City has received the following six applications:
 - 2004-01 – Proposed plan amendment to address the distribution and management of registered sex offenders
 - 2004-02 – Proposed modifications to shoreline regulations to allow condominiums in the S-1 Shoreline District
 - 2004-03 – Proposed change to the intensity from Single Family to Medium for a large parcel near McKinley Avenue & E. 75th Street to support future development of a retirement home
 - 2004-04 – Proposed modifications to shoreline regulations to increase the allowable height in the S-8 Shoreline District
 - 2004-05 – Proposed plan amendment to address the fair share distribution and management of halfway houses
 - 2003-01 – Proposed change to zoning from C-2 Commercial to R-2 One-Family Dwelling District at South 7th Street & Union Avenue (carried over from 2003)
17. The Planning Commission will conduct a screening evaluation of the above mentioned applications and determine, based on established criteria, which applications will be moved forward for consideration. Those that are moved forward will be considered concurrently with the key issues as identified in the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update.”**
18. Growth Management staff are completing, in conjunction with three Neighborhood Councils, land use assessments for the North End, South Tacoma and West End areas. Upon completion, new policies will be added to the Neighborhoods element of the Comprehensive Plan for each area and will replace and rescind current neighborhood plans for these areas.
19. After review, the Commission recommended that the draft **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** be revised slightly to incorporate public testimony and revise the schedule and append the proposed revisions to be considered in the 2004 Annual Amendment.

D. CONCLUSIONS:

The Planning Commission finds that the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** is consistent with the “2004 Update” requirements of the Growth Management Act. It is a proper work program that fulfills the requirement for the

compliance review in the first phase of the “2004 Update” process and provides the guidelines for accomplishing the needed revision in the second phase. Further, key issues identified in the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** will be considered concurrently with other proposed amendments including applications received for the 2004 Annual Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Planning Commission recommends that the City Council adopt the **“Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update”** as described above and as recommended by the Commission on April 21, 2004.

F. APPENDICIES:

1. **Scope of Work for the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update** – Planning Commission Recommended Draft, April 21, 2004
2. **2004 Annual Amendment to Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code** – A Summary of Anticipated Modifications and Contact Staff Information, April 2004